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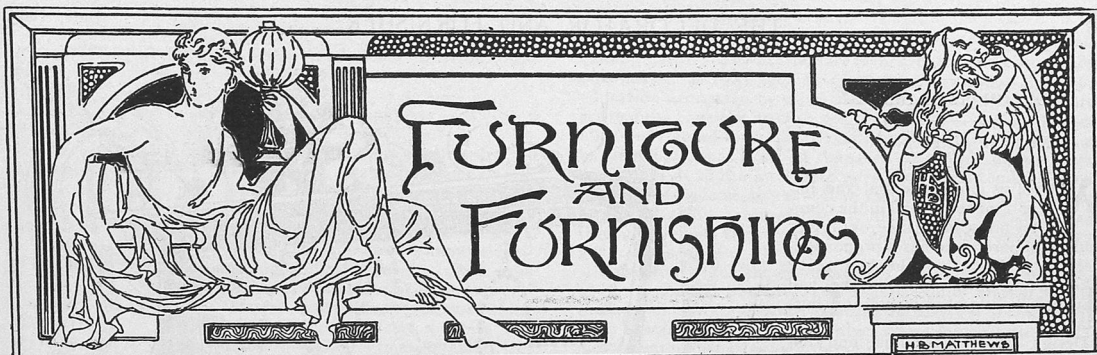
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THE DECORATIVE STYLES—VII. THE STYLE LOUIS XII.

By PAUL ROUAIX.



WHEN Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks, in 1453, the Greeks became scattered through the various countries of Europe, great numbers of them settling in Italy, into which they brought with them the memories of classic antiquity hitherto unknown or travestied.

This date is, properly speaking, the true beginning of the Renaissance, but between the end of the Gothic period and the time at which the Renaissance attained the height of its glory intervened a period of transition marked by a phenomenal activity in all the arts.

The latter half of the fifteenth century gives birth to a style in which are mingled the Pagan and Christian spirits, that of Gothic art and that of the Renaissance.

In the West the court of the House of Burgundy was the most brilliant center of the arts out of Italy.

In the very outset of this period the fine arts achieved masterpieces.

Architecture and ornamentation become simultaneously and imperceptibly modified.

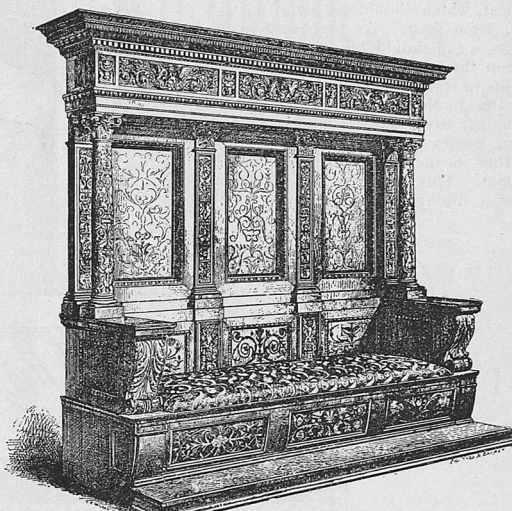


DECORATIVE PANEL, LOUIS XII. STYLE.

In the ceramic arts we see the triumph of the vigorous and original genius of Della Robbia, who modeled statues and bas-reliefs in many-colored enamels.

The style Louis XII. is the development in France of this first Renaissance brought from over the Alps through the agency of the Italian wars.

The general designs immediately assume classic features; the antique column, with its harmonious proportions, reappears in decoration, but preference still seems to be given over it to the pilaster, the flat surface of which lends itself admirably to



HALL SEAT IN LOUIS XII. STYLE.

the display of the sculptured arabesques characteristic of the period.

These arabesques consist principally of feeble attempts at the production of foliated scrolls, simple in design, leaving large proportions of the ground exposed, and almost always symmetrically arranged on both sides of a well-defined central axis. There is little relief and the projections are few. Flowers form the principal motives of the details. If now and then human or animal forms appear they are attenuated, reduced, and without importance or expression relatively to the general scheme of the decoration.

DECORATIVE NOTE.

THE introduction of tapestry in the hangings of a room gives a touch of time-honored delicate, silent, indescribable approval to the tastes of certain interiors. The heavy hangings recall Florentine glories and the Venetian and Roman palaces and villas; much of it is in Gobelin tapestry, wherein are woven pictorial legends and reproductions of famous paintings.

Portieres or tapestry in a large house are luxuries, but in a small house much lighter materials must be adopted. Very good imitation tapestry is woven in looms which has much of the charms of the time-stained, heavy woolen stuff. Painted tapestries are too well known to be described. In a city dining room nothing can be finer than a real old tapestry or panels of modern painted tapestry.